The Honorable Lauren King 1 2 3 4 UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT WESTERN DISTRICT OF WASHINGTON 5 AT SEATTLE 6 JEAN-BAPTISTE YAMINDI. NICKIESHA GORDON, FLORENCE MASUNDIRE and No. 2:22-CV-00961-LK 7 FITSUM SEIFU, AMENDED COMPLAINT 8 Plaintiffs, JURY DEMAND 9 v. 10 CAMERON OSMER and WASHINGTON STATE PATROL, 11 Defendant. 12 13 14 I. INTRODUCTION 15 1.1 This is a civil rights action brought under the Washington Law Against 16 Discrimination, 42 U.S.C. § 1983, and state tort law. 17 1.2 On separate occasions less than three months apart, Trooper Cameron Osmer of 18 the Washington State Patrol arrested plaintiffs for driving under the influence, despite that 19 plaintiffs blew 0.000 BAC ("Blood Alcohol Content") scores and showed no signs of 20 intoxication. Trooper Osmer then went a step farther, misleading judicial officers to obtain 21 warrants for blood from plaintiffs. All four plaintiffs' blood tests confirmed they were 22 completely innocent and all charges were dropped. 23 1.3 Trooper Osmer did not select the victims of these unlawful arrests randomly. All 24 four plaintiffs are immigrants. They speak with noticeable accents. And they are black. In the 25 span of less than three months, Trooper Osmer unlawfully arrested and obtained invasive blood 26 draws on all four. Plaintiffs seek damages and accountability before Trooper Osmer violates the 27 rights of other black or immigrant residents of King County.

II. PARTIES
2.1 Plaintiff Jean-Baptiste Yamindi is a resident of the State of Washington. He has
lived in Seattle since 2014. His race is black and he is originally from the Central African
Republic. He speaks fluent English with a French accent. Dr. Yamindi is employed as a software
engineer and holds a Ph.D and a Post-Doctorate in information systems and telecommunications
2.2 Plaintiff Nickiesha Gordon is a resident of the State of Florida, who resided in the
State of Washington as of November 2, 2020. Her race is black and her national origin is
Jamaican. She speaks fluent English with a Jamaican accent. She worked as a police officer in

2.3 Plaintiff Florence Masundire is a resident of the State of Washington. She has lived in Seattle since 2009. Her race is black and she is originally from Zimbabwe. She speaks fluent English with a slight accent. Ms. Masundire works two jobs as a certified nursing assistant. She is a devout Christian and is active in her church community.

Jamaica, and then became a home healthcare aid.

- 2.4 Plaintiff Fitsum Seifu is a resident of the State of Washington. She has lived in the United States since 2002. Her race is black and she is originally from Somalia. She speaks English with an Amharic accent. Ms. Seifu is employed as a home care giver.
- 2.5 Defendant Cameron Osmer is a State Trooper employed by the Washington State Patrol, acting at all relevant times under color of state of law. He is sued here in his individual capacity.
- 2.6 Defendant Washington State Patrol is an agency of the State of Washington, acting under color of state law.

### III. JURISDICTION, VENUE, and JOINDER

- 3.1 This Court has jurisdiction under 28 U.S.C. § 1331, and venue is proper under 28 U.S. Code § 1391, because the events giving rise to the claims arose in King County.
- 3.2 Joinder of Plaintiffs' claims is proper under Fed. R. Civ. P. 20 because Plaintiffs assert a right to relief jointly; their claims arise out of the same series of transactions or

1	occurrences a	and at the hand of the same individual defendant; and common questions of law and
2	fact will arise	in the action.
3		IV. FACTS
4	Troop	er Osmer Unlawfully Arrested and Searched Plaintiff Jean-Baptiste Yamindi
5	4.1	On October 11, 2020, Trooper Osmer was on patrol, driving southbound on I-5
6	near the Roan	ooke Exit in King County, when he saw Dr. Yamindi.
7	4.2	Trooper Osmer pulled Dr. Yamindi over for an alleged traffic infraction, which
8	was later disn	nissed.
9	4.3	Trooper Osmer could see that Dr. Yamindi was a black male, and could hear that
10	Dr. Yamindi	spoke with a noticeable accent.
11	4.4	Trooper Osmer told Dr. Yamindi to exit the vehicle.
12	4.5	Trooper Osmer had Dr. Yamindi take a breath test. The test showed a blood
13	alcohol conte	nt (BAC) of 0.000.
14	4.6	A BAC result of 0.000 indicates that the test subject is not impaired by alcohol.
15	4.7	Dr. Yamindi was in fact completely sober.
16	4.8	Dr. Yamindi explained to Trooper Osmer that he was sober and in fact never used
17	drugs or alcol	nol.
18	4.9	Trooper Osmer had Dr. Yamindi perform a series of field sobriety tests out of
19	view of the po	olice vehicle's dashboard camera.
20	4.10	Dr. Yamindi performed the tests satisfactorily and according to Trooper Osmer's
21	instructions.	
22	4.11	Trooper Osmer accused Dr. Yamindi of driving while intoxicated and handcuffed
23	and arrested I	Or. Yamindi.
24	4.12	Trooper Osmer searched Dr. Yamindi's car and person and found nothing
25	incriminating	•
26	4.13	Trooper Osmer had Dr. Yamindi's car impounded, damaging the car in the
27	process.	

- 4.14 Trooper Osmer obtained a search warrant for Dr. Yamindi's blood, and then obtained two vials of Dr. Yamindi's blood, which were tested for the presence of drugs or alcohol. The official test results showed zero alcohol or drugs in Dr. Yamindi's blood, consistent with the 0.000 BAC test result. All charges were dismissed.
- 4.15 In order to obtain a search warrant for blood from Dr. Yamindi, Trooper Osmer falsely represented to a Magistrate Judge in a warrant affidavit that there was a basis to believe Dr. Yamindi had been driving while impaired, when in fact there was none.
- 4.16 Trooper Osmer intentionally or recklessly made false statements and/or omissions in the warrant application, including the statement there was reason to believe Dr. Yamindi was impaired.
- 4.17 Trooper Osmer's reckless or intentional omissions and/or misrepresentations were material to the warrant application and the warrant would not have issued but for these reckless or intentional omissions and representations.
  - 4.18 All charges against Dr. Yamindi were dismissed.
  - 4.19 There was no probable cause to arrest Dr. Yamindi or draw his blood.
- 4.20 Trooper Osmer arrested and searched Dr. Yamindi without probable cause because Dr. Yamindi is black and/or because of Dr. Yamindi's national origin.
- 4.21 As a direct and proximate result of Trooper Osmer's unlawful arrest of Dr. Yamindi, Dr. Yamindi was forced to spend a night in jail in unsanitary conditions. At the time, individuals who did not pose public safety concerns were not to be placed in lockup because of the risks associated with COVID-19. Trooper Osmer nevertheless booked Dr. Yamindi into jail.
- 4.22 Trooper Osmer's actions directly and proximately caused Dr. Yamindi severe and ongoing mental anguish and distress. Furthermore, Dr. Yamindi was forced to defend against baseless a criminal prosecution and incurred associated costs.

## Trooper Osmer Unlawfully Arrested Plaintiff Nickiesha Gordon

4.23 Less than one month later, Trooper Osmer engaged in almost identical misconduct.

1	4.24	On November 2, 2020, Trooper Osmer was on patrol when he decided to follow
2	Nakeisha Gor	don as she drove eastbound on I-90, near the Mercer Way exit in King County.
3	4.25	Trooper Osmer pulled Ms. Gordon over for an alleged traffic infraction.
4	4.26	Trooper Osmer saw Ms. Gordon was a black female and heard that she spoke
5	with a Jamaic	an accent.
6	4.27	Trooper Osmer told Ms. Gordon to exit the vehicle.
7	4.28	Trooper Osmer had Ms. Gordon perform a breath test.
8	4.29	The breath test Trooper Osmer administered on the scene showed Ms. Gordon's
9	blood alcohol	content was 0.000.
10	4.30	Ms. Gordon was in fact completely sober.
11	4.31	Ms. Gordon explained she was not driving under the influence, to which Trooper
12	Osmer replied	l, "Well then, let's prove that."
13	4.32	Trooper Osmer had Ms. Gordon perform additional field sobriety tests including
14	the "Horizonta	al Gaze Nystagmus," "the One Leg Stand," and the "Walk and Turn."
15	4.33	Ms. Gordon performed all the tests satisfactorily and as instructed.
16	4.34	Ms. Gordon explained to Trooper Osmer that she was returning from a long shift
17	at work. She	offered to call her supervisor to confirm this, but Trooper Osmer refused.
18	4.35	Trooper Osmer handcuffed Ms. Gordon and placed her under arrest for driving
19	under the influ	uence.
20	4.36	Trooper Osmer had Ms. Gordon's car impounded.
21	4.37	Trooper Osmer transported Ms. Gordon in handcuffs to the Washington State
22	Patrol Office	in Bellevue.
23	4.38	Trooper Osmer obtained a search warrant for two vials of blood from Ms.
24	Gordon, and h	had the blood tested for the presence of alcohol or drugs. The result of the blood test
25	ultimately sho	owed that Ms. Gordon had not consumed any drugs or alcohol.
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- 4.39 In order to obtain a search warrant for Ms. Gordon's blood, Trooper Osmer falsely represented to a Magistrate Judge that there was reason to believe Ms. Gordon was impaired.
- 4.40 Trooper Osmer's statement that there was reason to believe Ms. Gordon was impaired was an intentional or reckless misstatement or omission.
- 4.41 Whether there was reason to believe Ms. Gordon was impaired was material to probable cause or the lack thereof. The warrant would not have issued but for Trooper Osmer's false statement that there was reason to believe Ms. Gordon was impaired.
- 4.42 Trooper Osmer took Ms. Gordon to King County Jail and booked her. At that time, non-violent offenders were not to be placed in lockup because of the risks associated with COVID-19. Trooper Osmer nevertheless booked Ms. Gordon into jail.
  - 4.43 All charges were dismissed.
  - 4.44 There was no probable cause to arrest Ms. Gordon or draw her blood.
- 4.45 Trooper Osmer arrested and searched Ms. Gordon without probable because she is black and/or because of her national origin.
- 4.46 As a direct and proximate result of Trooper Osmer's false arrest of Ms. Gordon, Ms. Gordon was forced to spend the night in jail at the height of the pandemic, then defend against a baseless criminal prosecution and incur associated costs and harms. Furthermore, Trooper Osmer's actions caused her to lose her job, and she was forced to move across the country where she could rely on the support of her relatives. The record of the false arrest continues to prevent Ms. Gordon from obtaining employment. Trooper Osmer's actions also caused Ms. Gordon ongoing mental anguish and distress.

#### Trooper Osmer Unlawfully Arrested Plaintiff Fitsum Seifu

4.47 Eighteen days later, Trooper Osmer again engaged in almost identical misconduct. Trooper Osmer pulled Ms. Seifu over on northbound I-5, just south of SR 520 for allegedly driving 40 mph in a 60 mph zone and making slow lane changes.

1	4.48 Trooper Osmer saw Ms. Seifu was a black female and heard that she spoke with
2	an accent.
3	4.49 Trooper Osmer told Ms. Seifu to exit the vehicle.
4	4.50 Trooper Osmer had Ms. Seifu perform a breath test.
5	4.51 The breath test Trooper Osmer administered on the scene showed Ms. Seifu's
6	blood alcohol content was 0.000.
7	4.52 Ms. Seifu was in fact completely sober.
8	4.53 Ms. Seifu stated repeatedly that she had not taken any medication, drugs, and
9	informed Trooper Osmer that she does not consume alcohol.
10	4.54 Trooper Osmer told Ms. Seifu that her eyes were red and bloodshot. Ms. Seifu
11	responded that her brother had recently passed away and her eyes were red because she had been
12	crying.
13	4.55 Trooper Osmer had Ms. Seifu perform additional field sobriety tests including the
14	"Horizontal Gaze Nystagmus," the "Modified Romberg," and the "Walk and Turn."
15	4.56 Ms. Seifu performed all the tests satisfactorily and as instructed.
16	4.57 Trooper Osmer called two Washington State Patrol Drug Recognition Experts for
17	advice on potential substances she could have taken. After placing the two phone calls, he placed
18	Ms. Seifu under arrest for driving under the influence and handcuffed her.
19	4.58 Trooper Osmer transported Ms. Seifu in handcuffs to the Washington State Patrol
20	Office in Bellevue.
21	4.59 Trooper Osmer obtained a search warrant for two vials of blood from Ms. Seifu,
22	and had the blood tested for the presence of alcohol or drugs. The result of the blood test
23	ultimately showed that Ms. Seifu had not consumed any drugs or alcohol.
24	4.60 In order to obtain a search warrant for Ms. Seifu's blood, Trooper Osmer falsely
25	represented to a Judge that there was reason to believe Ms. Seifu was impaired.
26	4.61 Trooper Osmer's statement that there was reason to believe Ms. Seifu was
27	impaired was an intentional or reckless misstatement or omission.

1	4.73 Trooper Osmer asked Ms. Masundire what the pills were for. Ms. Masundire told
2	Trooper Osmer that the pills were for high blood pressure and other medical conditions. Troope
3	Osmer told Ms. Masundire that she had taken the pills and was intoxicated.
4	4.74 Trooper Osmer told Ms. Masundire to exit the vehicle.
5	4.75 Trooper Osmer confiscated Ms. Masundire's cell phone.
6	4.76 Trooper Osmer had Ms. Masundire perform a breath test.
7	4.77 The breath test Trooper Osmer administered on the scene showed Ms.
8	Masundire's blood alcohol content was 0.000.
9	4.78 Trooper Osmer administered the breath test at least four times. He accused Ms.
10	Masundire of cheating.
11	4.79 Trooper Osmer accused Ms. Masundire of stealing medications from her
12	workplace.
13	4.80 Trooper Osmer had Ms. Masundire perform additional field sobriety tests
14	including the "Horizontal Gaze Nystagmus," the "Modified Romberg," and the "Walk and
15	Turn."
16	4.81 Ms. Masundire was in fact completely sober.
17	4.82 Ms. Masundire performed all the tests satisfactorily and as instructed.
18	4.83 Trooper Osmer asked Ms. Masundire if she knew anyone who could pick up her
9	car. She responded that her brother-in-law could pick up her car. Trooper Osmer asked Ms.
20	Masundire if her brother-in-law can speak "good English." Ms. Masundire responded, "yes, he
21	white like you, and from the United States."
22	4.84 Ms. Masundire called her brother-in-law and he came to pick up her car.
23	4.85 Trooper Osmer transported Ms. Masundire in handcuffs to the Washington State
24	Patrol Office in Bellevue.
25	4.86 At the Washington State Patrol Office in Bellevue, Trooper Osmer required Ms.
26	Masundire to stand for one hour while handcuffed. Ms. Masundire told Trooper Osmer that she
27	was in pain.

1	4.87 Trooper Osmer obtained a search warrant for two vials of blood from Ms.
2	Masundire, and had the blood tested for the presence of alcohol or drugs. The result of the blood
3	test ultimately showed that Ms. Masundire had not consumed any drugs or alcohol.
4	4.88 In order to obtain a search warrant for Ms. Masundire's blood, Trooper Osmer
5	falsely represented to a Judge that there was reason to believe Ms. Masundire was impaired.
6	4.89 Trooper Osmer's statement that there was reason to believe Ms. Masundire was
7	impaired was an intentional or reckless misstatement or omission.
8	4.90 Whether there was reason to believe Ms. Masundire was impaired was material to
9	probable cause or the lack thereof. The warrant would not have issued but for Trooper Osmer's
10	false statement that there was reason to believe Ms. Masundire was impaired.
11	4.91 Trooper Osmer left Ms. Masundire at the hospital after her blood was drawn. She
12	was not told whether she could leave the hospital. When Trooper Osmer left Ms. Masundire, he
13	told her, "why are you crying? You are lucky that I am not sending you to jail."
14	4.92 Ms. Masundire called her sister to pick her up at the hospital, and was driven to
15	her home.
16	4.93 All charges were dismissed.
17	4.94 There was no probable cause to arrest Ms. Masundire or draw her blood.
18	4.95 Trooper Osmer arrested and searched Ms. Masundire without probable cause
19	because she is black and/or because of her national origin.
20	4.96 As a direct and proximate result of Trooper Osmer's false arrest of Ms.
21	Masundire, Ms. Masundire was forced to defend against a baseless criminal prosecution and
22	incur associated costs and harms. Trooper Osmer's actions caused Ms. Masundire ongoing
23	mental anguish and distress.
24	Allegations Against Washington State Patrol
25	4.97 Additionally, or alternatively, Trooper Osmer acted at all times according to
26	Washington State Patrol polices and directives.
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1	4.98 At all relevant times, Trooper Osmer was an employee of the Washington State
2	Patrol.
3	4.99 At all relevant times, Trooper Osmer acted within the scope of his employment
4	and under color of state law.
5	4.100 At all relevant times, the Washington State Patrol had a duty to exercise due care
6	in hiring, training, directing, and supervising its employees, including Trooper Osmer.
7	4.101 As part of that duty, the Washington State Patrol knew or should have known that
8	its conduct in hiring, training, directing, and/or supervising Trooper Osmer created an
9	unreasonable risk that black and/or immigrant drivers including Dr. Yamindi, Ms. Gordon, Ms.
10	Seifu, and Ms. Masundire would be arrested and searched without probable cause.
11	4.102 The Washington State Patrol knew or should have known that failure to properly
12	vet, train, direct, and/or supervise Trooper Osmer with respect to race and/or national origin bias
13	and/or the legal standards governing searches and arrests under the 4 <sup>th</sup> Amendment could and
14	would result in unlawful arrests and/or searches of black and immigrant drivers like Dr.
15	Yamindi, Ms. Gordon, Ms. Seifu, and Ms. Masundire. Trooper Osmer arrests black drivers for
16	alleged DUI at disproportionate rates. Trooper Osmer's conduct is consistent with public reports
17	of racial disparities in the Washington State Patrol's enforcement activity in King County. See,
18	e.g., Report to the Washington State Patrol, Sanders, et al., Wash. State. Univ., 2021, available
19	at: https://www.wsp.wa.gov/wp-content/uploads/2022/02/WSP-Bias-Traffic-Stop-
20	<u>Study_2021.pdf</u> (accessed June 10, 2022).
21	4.103 The Washington State Patrol knew that Trooper Osmer had a disproportionate
22	number of blood toxicology tests returned with no detected substances.
23	4.104 The Washington State Patrol failed to exercise due care in hiring, training, and/or
24	supervising Trooper Osmer.
25	COVID-19 Allegations
26	4.105 Trooper Osmer's false arrests of Dr. Yamindi, Ms. Gordon, Ms. Seifu, and Ms.
27	Masundire occurred during the height of the COVID-19 pandemic.

## Violations of the Fourth Amendment Under 42 U.S.C. § 1983 by Trooper Osmer

- 5.4 Trooper Osmer violated Plaintiffs' clearly established right to be free from unreasonable seizures, protected by U.S. Const. amend. IV, when he arrested them without probable cause.
- 5.5 Trooper Osmer violated Plaintiffs' clearly established right to be free from unreasonable searches, protected by U.S. Const. amend. IV, when he caused their blood to be drawn without probable cause.
- 5.6 Trooper Osmer violated Plaintiffs' clearly established right to be free from unreasonable searches, protected by U.S. Const. amend. IV, when he made intentional or reckless omissions and/or misrepresentations to judicial officers to obtain search warrants to draw Plaintiffs' blood.

## **Negligence by Trooper Osmer**

5.7 Trooper Osmer negligently exposed Plaintiffs Yamindi, Gordon, Seifu, and Masundire to the risk of COVID-19 infection.

# Negligence by Defendant Washington State Patrol

- 5.8 Washington State Patrol negligently hired, trained, directed and/or supervised Trooper Osmer, causing Plaintiffs Yamindi, Gordon, Seifu, and Masundire to be exposed to the risks of COVID-19.
- 5.9 Washington State Patrol is further liable for all of Trooper Osmer's negligence as his employer, under the doctrine of *respondeat superior*.

#### VI. PRAYER FOR RELIEF

- WHEREFORE, Plaintiffs Jean-Baptiste Yamindi, Nakeisha Gordon, Fitsum Seifu, and Florence Masundire request the following relief:
  - 6.1 A trial by jury on all claims so triable;
  - 6.2 All compensatory and punitive damages authorized by law;
  - 6.3 Additional compensation for any potential increased tax burden;
  - 6.4 The right to amend the pleadings to conform with the evidence;

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1	6.5 Reasonable attorney's fees and costs under 42 U.S.C. § 1988; RCW 49.60.030,
2	and other applicable law.
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4	DATED this 5 <sup>th</sup> day of May 2023.
5	
6	MacDONALD HOAGUE & BAYLESS
7	
8	By: <u>/s/_ Anika Ades</u>
9	Joe Shaeffer, WSBA #33273 Nathaniel Flack, WSBA #58582
10	Anika Ades, WSBA #60298 joe@mhb.com
11	nathanielf@mhb.com
12	anikaa@mhb.com Attorneys for Plaintiffs
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1	<u>CERTIFICATE OF SERVICE</u>
2	I hereby certify that on this date I electronically filed the foregoing document with the
3	Clerk of the Court using the CM/ECF system, which will send notification of such filing to the
4	following individuals:
5	
6	Attorneys for Defendants
7	GORRY SRA, WSBA No. 49999
8	Assistant Attorney General Office of the Attorney General – Torts Div.
9	800 Fifth Avenue, Suite 2000 Seattle, WA 98104-3188
10	Gorry.Sra@atg.wa.gov
11	Kelsey Baye, Paralegal Kelsey.Baye@atg.wa.gov
12	
13	Denise Daunais, Legal Assistant <u>Denise.Daunais@atg.wa.gov</u>
14	E-service Box
15	TORSeaEF@atg.wa.gov
16	DATED At 5th 1 CAS 2000 AG AL WALL
17	DATED this 5 <sup>th</sup> day of May, 2023, at Seattle, Washington.
18	s/ Lucas Wildner
19	Lucas Wildner, Legal Assistant
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